

The Abraham Lincoln National Airport Commission (ALNAC) welcomed its first member from Kankakee County as Hopkins Park became the 33rd community to join the Commission which is spearheading efforts to build an innovative new airport in the south suburbs.

"This is a significant achievement for ALNAC. It shows growing support for our public-private partnership. And it means our plan is now endorsed by elected officials from three counties -- Cook, Will and Kankakee," said Congressman Jesse Jackson Jr., an ALNAC supporter.

Hopkins Park is a small town near the Illinois-Indiana state line located in Pembroke Township, one of the poorest townships in the nation.

"Pembroke has no industry, no gas station, no pharmacy, no ATM machine, not even a grocery store. Many homes lack common utility services. Many streets are unpaved. But that will begin to change with the new airport and the economic opportunities it attracts," Jackson said.

Jackson noted that it was Pembroke Township where, in 2002, Governor Blagojevich launched his "Team Illinois" initiative to revitalize needy communities. Under the "Team Illinois" program, several state agencies, including the Departments of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Public Health, and Education, brought together resources to upgrade and improve local services. At the time, Blagojevich's program received national press attention.

"Pembroke is now part of Team Illinois and Team ALNAC," Jackson said today.

The Lincoln National Airport plan, which is endorsed by Blagojevich and is facing final review by the Federal Aviation Administration, would be financed, built and operated by private developers, and managed by ALNAC, a public airport commission formed under state law.

"Today we welcome our colleagues in Kankakee County, and we broaden our regional consensus for this airport. I want to reiterate that ALNAC's door remains open for any and all communities in Cook, Will and Kankakee counties with the same spirit, and who support this

innovative and necessary aviation project," Jackson concluded.